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GENERAL DEBATE

ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 13 October 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a reply to the statement of the Foreign Minister of Albania made at the fiftieth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 9, 103, 104 and 112.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Reply by Yugoslavia to the statement made on 2 October 1995 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session

At the time when the United Nations and the international community are investing major efforts to achieve a just and lasting political solution to the crisis in the territories of the former Yugoslavia, Albania again resorts to its well-known policy of launching unsubstantiated attacks against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Instead of invoking the basic principles of the United Nations - peace, cooperation, good-neighbourliness - the Foreign Minister of Albania abused the rostrum of the General Assembly to make a statement teeming with hostility, false allegations and threats against the neighbouring Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Thus Albania once again demonstrated that it has never abandoned its ambitions to satisfy its main political goals at the expense of its neighbours. By pursuing such a policy, Albania not only impairs good relations with all its neighbours, but represents a major threat to peace and stability in the Balkans.

At the present stage of the peace process when an agreement has been reached in Geneva and New York about the principles, constitutional arrangements and the cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the entire international community, headed by the United Nations, has welcomed the efforts and results of the Contact Group and the constructive and peaceful role of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well as the personal contribution of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević. It is widely recognized that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is an unavoidable factor for achieving a peaceful and just solution to the Yugoslav crisis and that it has made the greatest contribution towards that end. Only Albania does not recognize these peace efforts. It continues to call for military intervention against the Serbs and insist on maintaining the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, contrary to the decision of the United Nations Security Council on their partial suspension.

It is obvious that Mr. Serreqi's principal goal was an attempt at discrediting the peaceful policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and internationalizing the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. The insistence of Albania on conditioning the return of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the international organizations in whose activities it does not presently participate and the lifting of sanctions with the solution of the so-called question of Kosovo and Metohija is absolutely unacceptable. In doing so, Albania has provided ample evidence that it has continued to interfere flagrantly in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and be engaged in anti-Yugoslav activities in international forums.

Mr. Serreqi once again demonstrated that Albania's basic foreign policy issue is to support the secessionists in Kosovo and Metohija, an integral part of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Albania is the only country in the world that has recognized the self-proclaimed, non-existent "Republic of Kosovo". This it has done in pursuit of its

expansionist goal: to break up the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia by encouraging the secession of Kosovo and Metohija and its subsequent annexation by Albania.

The allegations of Mr. Serreqi about torture, police repression and the ethnic cleansing of members of the Albanian national minority and the abolition of the autonomy of Kosovo and Metohija are absolutely untrue and unsubstantiated. It is well known that the Province of Kosovo and Metohija has a constitutionally guaranteed status of territorial autonomy within the Republic of Serbia. The Constitutions of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia guarantee the Albanian national minority full protection of its human and minority rights in accordance with the highest international standards.

The real issue of Kosovo and Metohija is not the alleged violation of the human rights of the Albanian national minority as contended by Mr. Serreqi, but the fact that under the pressure of their separatist leaders and with the outright support of Albania, the members of the Albanian national minority do not exercise the autonomy and rights provided by the Constitution. In doing so, they boycott elections and political institutions of the Republic of Serbia and, in part, the system of education and health protection. None the less, Yugoslavia has sought to establish direct dialogue and achieve democratic agreement with the Albanian national minority through the legal institutions of the system and to find solutions to outstanding questions. The only condition is that the members of the Albanian national minority respect the constitutional framework of the Republic of Serbia. Officially supported and encouraged by Albania, they have refused to do so thus far. Therefore, it would have been much more constructive if Mr. Serreqi had urged the members of the Albanian minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to exercise all their constitutionally guaranteed rights.

The real situation in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija and the scope of human rights granted to the Albanian national minority are detailed in the aide-mémoire on political manipulations by the Albanian national minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in other documents that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has submitted to the United Nations and all other relevant international organizations and forums. Following are only some of the data reflecting the accurate situation in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which testify to the absurdity of the allegations of Mr. Serreqi and Albanian propaganda.

Out of 120,000 employees in the social sector in Kosovo and Metohija, 60 per cent are members of the Albanian national minority. They account for over 95 per cent of private sector employees. After a period of boycott, the members of the Albanian national minority have begun to use health services in medical institutions again. Albanian children attend elementary school in the Albanian language. The Albanian national minority has also its Section of the Academy of Sciences, professional and amateur theatres, associations of artists, writers and musicians and over a hundred cultural and artistic societies. The Albanian "Drama Department" in the National Theatre in Priština performs in the Albanian language. Radio and TV Priština broadcast regular programmes in Albanian and 22 papers and magazines in the Province come out in Albanian as well.

The members of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija have five major political parties. All of them have been officially registered, have their own premises and some of them issue their own newspapers and magazines. There is also the Association of Independent Trade Unions whose members are only members of the Albanian national minority. All of them have declined to participate in the legal institutions even though they would have had a crucial role in their deliberations and decision-making.

Albania is abusing the tragedy of the Serb refugees expelled from the Republic of Serb Krajina in the brutal aggression of the Croatian Army to level new accusations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Out of 200,000 Serbs, who were forced out of the Krajina, only about 7,000 have been given temporary shelter in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija. It is senseless and outrageous to allege that, compared with a total of 1,900,000 Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Romanies, Turks and others, this negligible figure can in any way disturb the demographic structure of the Province. Mr. Serreqi characterizes the accommodation of these Serb refugees as the threat of an explosion that would bring into question the hitherto peaceful policy of the Albanian national minority. Is not Mr. Serreqi calling for war in Kosovo and Metohija all over again? Mr. Serreqi must know that it is the sovereign right of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to settle Serb refugees in their entire territories, which in no way can disturb the demographic structure in Kosovo and Metohija where Albanian separatists pursued a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Serbs and Montenegrins for years.

By making such outrageous allegations, Albania actually acknowledges that it aspires towards the creation of ethnically pure States, which is typical only of totalitarian regimes. Moreover, while masquerading as a protector of the Albanian national minority and encouraging separatism in Kosovo and Metohija, Albania does not recognize the rights of the national minorities in its own territory, including the Serbs, Montenegrins and Goranci. It even denies their very existence and deprives them of all their cultural and religious rights and freedoms. For example, they are denied the right to the official use of their mother tongue in schools and newspapers and on radio and TV. Serbian monuments are being desecrated and the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church is being seized. Lately, the police have stepped up pressure on members of the Serb and Montenegrin minorities around the town of Shkoder in order to expel them from their ancestral homes and seize their property and give it to the Albanians.

The latest callous attack of Mr. Serreqi on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia comes after a number of constructive Yugoslavia initiatives towards Albania, aimed at establishing dialogue and setting a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two States. Numerous unacceptable conditions set by the Albanian side unfortunately prevented this dialogue from taking place. However, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stands ready to develop good-neighbourly relations with all neighbouring States, including Albania, on the basis of equality, non-interference and mutual respect for territorial integrity. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that dialogue is the right way to normalize mutual relations and establish good-neighbourly relations between our two countries, which can contribute to the strengthening of peace and stability in our region.

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